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A
LETTER
ON THE
SUBJECT
OF THE
SUCCESSION.

*Do Regum Domino, Regi, Patriæque, tibi que,
Hunc librum; tantum candidus esto, cape.*

*Nullum numen abest, nam Rex, proceresque favebunt:
I liber, & sanos instrue, vince malos.*



Printed at LONDON, 1679.

To the READER.

AN Epistle to an Epistle might well enough be spared, especially to one so short. I will not stand to dispute, whether it be a fault or not; only if it be, it shall be no great one, for I shall end it almost as soon as begun. What follows is not like most of the late printed Pamphlets, an imaginary, but a real Letter. It was designed only for a private; however now it meets the publick view. The Author neither fears nor values the Censure of any in this case. There was no occasion for an Accurate Stile in a Letter to an intimate Friend. For the rest, the Author has spoken, as an honest Man, his real Judgment; and in the integrity of his heart, has owned a righteous Cause. If any thing he has said, shall conduce to rectify those contrary erroneous Opinions, wherewith too many minds are tainted, he shall heartily bless God for making any thing of his instrumental to so much Good.

FAREWELL.



D. H. L. Sept. 18. 1679.

SIR,

I Intend now to write you some of my Sentiments, upon that great Subject of Discourse here, *The Succession of the Duke of York, in case of our present Sovereign's Death without lawful Issue*: But on such a nice *Thesis*, tho I know your Loyalty and your Friendship so much, yet for fear what I address and design to your self only, should by some chance fall into other hands, I shall repeat to you things that you are very well acquainted with already, that is; That I am an *Englishman* by Birth and by Descent; by Interest, Alliance, and Affection: That I was born and educated in the Metropolis of *England*, and even in the House from whence I write you this: That I am not alienated from the Love of my Country; but on the contrary, that I highly cherish in my self; the sense of that Duty and Fidelity that I owe it: That my Religion is Christianity, which some perhaps (for the sake of this Letter) after the usual abundance of their want of Charity, may fairly question; more particularly, that I profess my self a Son of my sacred Mother the Church of *England*, as it is now by Law established, assenting fully to her Doctrine and Discipline; and after mature consideration resting satisfied, that no Church, or pretended Church, upon Earth, does come so near to the Truth, to the Simplicity, to the Purity and Holiness of the Primitive Christians, as the Church of *England* does in her Constitutions and Canons. I thank God I am neither way warped in my Principles; I mean neither popishly

nor schilminatically. I appeal to your knowledge of me, and besides am ready, if a just and necessary occasion requires it, to appear in my own vindication; and free my self from the Aspersions of *Jesuit*, or *Papist*, that I am sensible will certainly fall to my share, if chance guide this Letter among phanatick hands instead of yours: For whoever goes about to defend the Dukes just Right to the Succession of these Crowns, notwithstanding his defection from the Protestant Church, is sure to be treated by them with the Titles of *Priest*, *Jesuit*, *Papist*, *popishly affected*, *Betrayer of the Protestant Cause*, and the *Liberty of his Country*. But I am not, nor can be affrighted from my Duty and Loyalty, to my God, my King, and my Country, by the loud causeless Outcries, by the Falshoods and Calumnies of Men of so guilty Principles and Practices. I can be secure enough from their unjust Rage and Fury, by the only sence of my own Innocence; and can see the Storm spend it self, under the safe shelter of a just Cause. Who would have thought a private Letter to a Friend should have needed a Preface? Yet such is the Iniquity of our Times, and the Judgments of so many are infatuated by that Spirit of Schism and Faction that prevails so much amongst us, that every loyal Word stands in need, not only of an Apologist, but of a skilful and vigorous Defender. No Man does, or can doubt but that His Royal Highness the Duke of YORK is the true, certain, and indubitable Heir apparent to His Brother King CHARLES the Second, our present Sovereign now reigning, (whom God long preserve) as having no Issue by His Royal Consort the Queen. No Man doubts of this; the Law of the Land, and constant Practice of this Kingdom, has ascertained the thing, that the Imperial Crown of these Nations is *Hereditary*, and the Succession is universally acknowledged and determined to be vested in the *lawful* Heir. *Who is the Heir?* has sometimes been the Question; but *that the Heir should reign*, has always been unquestionable.

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I need not, *Sir*, cite either Law or History to you, to prove the Truth of what I have said: You are too well acquainted with both: Though this indeed is so known a Truth, that none I think so much as pretend, either to doubt or be ignorant of it. That vain malicious distinction of Heir *apparent* and Heir *presumptive*, endeavoured to be set up by some, (in hatred to the Duke as it may well be thought) was quickly exploded, with the just and general detestation of honest Men. Well then, there is no shadow for Dispute, either that the Crown is hereditary, or that the Duke is Heir. With what strange impiety is it then, that Men, who would be thought both good Protestants and good Patriots, go about to deprive the Illustrious Prince of his undoubted Right of Succession to these Crowns? I seriously vow, *Sir*, that I cannot reflect upon this paricidal Attempt, (for so me thinks it is) but with infinite trouble and sorrow. The Name of the *English*, and the Religion and Morals of *Protestants*, will become the Scorn and Odium of the World; if we again endeavour to repeat our former accursed Crime, of deposing our Prince by pretence of Zeal for our Faith, and with a Face of Law and Justice. Our provocations of God must surely have been infinitely great, that we are thus given over to our Destruction, that we run thus violently again to the same Precipice, where so very lately our Religion, Laws, Liberties, and Properties, were fatally dashed to pieces; never but by Miracle to be restored.

I cannot conceive how it has happened, that the Duke is thus fallen in the Esteem of the People: It must be sure by the evil Arts of bad Men, who for private Ends of their own have alienated the Minds of Men from the Duke; and in so doing, have at the same time infinitely hazarded the publick Peace of these Nations.

Are not these kind of Attempts, to disturb the Succession in the Right Line and Course, a sort of acting, that seems to justify the Actions of the late eternally infamous Regicides.

For God's sake, is the Cry of Law and Justice, Liberty, and Property, intended so particularly for the People, that the King must have no share?

Cannot Privileges be kept, without interfering with Prerogative? And whilst Right and Property is secured to all Men, must the Heir apparent to the Crown be the only Person excluded?

I am sorry to perceive so much ingratitude in *Englishmen*. Has not the Duke asserted the Rights of his Country, with the hazard of his Life? Has he not acquired immortal Honour, by Victories obtained over the Enemies of his Country? Has he not often freely, with an undaunted Mind, exposed himself to a thousand hazards and dangers for the Glory and Service of his Prince and People? The whole World answers, *Yes*; and that the Military Atchievements of the Illustrious HERO shall live in the Breath of Fame eternal Ages. Is he not likewise Son to *Charles* the First, the best of Men and Kings that ever graced a Throne? A Prince, who having worn a Crown of Gold at his Coronation, a Crown of Thorns in his Afflictions, and a Crown of Martyrdom at his Death, enjoys now in Heaven a Crown of Glory, as the Reward of his consummated Virtue; and on Earth, his Memory is crowned with Blessings and Veneration. Is he not moreover the only surviving Brother of King *Charles* the Second? A Prince, whose God-like Clemency and Mercy, whose Love of all Justice, and true Paternal Piety to his People, can be never enough valued or admired. Is there any Royal Blood in *Europe*, whereof that that flows in the Veins of Royal *York* does not participate? Are not the Qualities of his Mind answerable to the Greatness of his Birth? All Men acknowledge the Gallantry of his Actions, and confess that there can be no where found a greater Captain, or a braver Soldier. He is indeed Master of all those Royal and Heroical Virtues, that are wont to distinguish Princes from Common Persons. Valour, Resolution, Conduct, and Magnanimity,
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are the Habits of his Soul : And all that ever knew him nearly , do unanimously agree in this , That he is the best Master , the best Friend , and the most just to his Word , of any Prince in the World.

But alas ! it were in vain for me to attempt his Character. I leave that Province as the Task of some great Historian ; and the greatest of them , or the best Masters of Eloquence , will find it difficult enough to adapt Expressions to the Grandeur of the Subject.

The Genius of the Nation has sure abandon'd it , it would not else suffer us thus at once to thrust from us that Happiness , we might reasonably expect under the Reign of a Prince so fitly qualified for Government.

What can we say to this , more than with sorrow and amazement to repeat the old Verse ,

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

Religion , the true and only real Happiness even of this Life , but the sole and most certain Guide to the Joys of Eternity , by the wretched artifice of pernicious Men , is made the Pretence for those worst of Crimes , *Rebellion* and *Treason*.

What streams of Evil have flowed from that Fountain ! Nay , what Wickedness is there , that has not been perpetrated under the Mask of Devotion ! Let us but look back upon our late intestine Wars , and consider a little the lamentable prospect it affords us.

At the first view , we discern nothing but poor innocent Devotion , humbly supplicating on the behalf of tender Consciences for a due Reformation of Abuses crept into the Church , only in order to the Regulation of Life , and the Purity of Religion. But look we yet a little forwarder , and we discover such a Series of horrid Facts , committed under the shelter of those Pretences , as Hell it self can hardly parallel ; Murders , Rapine , Oppression , Plunderings , Sequestrations , Sacrileges , Prophanation of all Things holy , whether Times , Places , Persons , or

Things, Contempt of Laws, intermixt with a thousand other wretched Villanies too dreadful to be repeated. Yet in less than twenty years we grow weary of our Quiet, and are mad to be involv'd again in those wretched Distractions, from which nothing but the infinite Power and Goodness of God has miraculously freed us. It is to me matter of the greatest wonder, that the same People, twice in the same Age, can be drawn to ruin by the same Cheat. Yet so it is with us, or would be, if the earnest and continual endeavours of too many among us might prevail. But the over-ruling Providence of the Almighty will, I hope, disappoint the Expectation of these *Boute-feu's*, and scatter that Wild-fire they intend for the Destruction of Church and State, into their own Houses, to their own confusion. Methinks the worthy *English* Nation should at last awake from the fatal Lethargy that has hung so long upon them, should look on the Maxims they are led by; and not with the same implicit Faith that they so worthily condemn in Papists, be blindly drawn on to the Commission of the greatest Evils, because some leading, popular Men (who direct those mischiefs for their own advantage) are pleased to stile themselves (most falsely God knows) the only maintainers of the cause of Religion, and the sole Defenders, and Pillars of support and safety to the State. For with how much scorn soever they would reject any, that should accuse them of blind and implicit Obedience, they are yet most notorious guilty of it, being basely and cruelly imposed on in matters of the highest moment, by men that only pursue their own private Interest or Revenge. Nothing is more apparent than the truth of this; for would they but open their Eyes, and consider things truly as they are; they must needs plainly see, that the methods they pursue, can never be the result of Councils designed for the Interest of Religion, or the Peace and Safety of the State. Not for the Interest of Religion; for Religion abhors to be Established, but by those ways and means that God himself

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has appointed. Do we condemn that practice of too many *Romanists*, who allow of any Act of Sin directed to the Good of the Catholick Church, and shall we ourselves fall into the same Guilt that we condemn in them? Shall we commit evil, that good may come of it?

In plain words, shall we break the known Commandments of God, that enjoin Duty, Obedience, and Loyalty, to the King, with pretence of doing it for the Churches safety? Were all their pretended Fears for the Protestant Religion, grounded upon Truth and Reason, yet sure the Church of the Most Holy God is not to be rescued by the power of Satan, as they would impiously do: For *Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft*. Let such fiery Bigots remember, and tremble at the Judgment shewed upon *Uzzah*, who inconsiderately stretching out his sinful hand, was struck dead for his temerity. They may see by that fearful Example, how dangerous it is to follow even good Intentions, where there is no express Command of God; and infinitely more then, when by so doing they shall act contrary to his express Command. God and Religion are both highly dishonoured, by the rash and sinful proceedings of such indiscreet Zealots. Cannot the Almighty assert his Cause, without the unjust aid of sinful Men? Cannot he maintain the Purity of his Church, but by Faction, Treason, and Rebellion? Is the Hand of God so shortned, that the Aid of Hell must be called in to his Assistance? I tremble at such horrid practices. The primitive Christians were ever the loyallest Subjects of their Pagan Kings. They opposed no other Arms to all the severity of their cruel Persecutors, but only Prayers and Tears. They submitted readily and chearfully to their Prince, and to his Laws, and abhorred to think of easing their own Torments, or aiding the Church, by any endeavour to oppose the Prince reigning, or defeat his lawful Heir. It is after this manner, most certainly, we ought now to demean ourselves. Let a sincere Repentance deprecate the Judgments of God, and let our fervent Prayers continually

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beg of the Almighty Being, to restore our Church once more, and ever, to continue it the Support and Ornament of this excellent Prince. This way, if faithfully and sincerely follow'd, may possibly succeed. But by open violence, by unjust force or secret fraud, to seek to interrupt the Succession, must probably terminate, if not in a general Ruin, yet at last to the Destruction of the wicked Undertakers and Fomenters of it.

And as it thus appears, that the Designs of such Men can be no advantage to the Protestant Religion; so it is evident, that the Peace and Safety of the State can never be more hazarded, than by such unjust and unlawful Courses. Can any be so dull, to think that the Duke will tamely suffer himself to be robbed of his just Rights? Can they believe, that all the Princes of *Europe* will not powerfully assist him in the Recovery of them? And then what a Scene of Blood and Slaughter would this poor Isle become! But besides the Assistance, that in such case would easily by the Duke be obtained from abroad, I do not at all question, but that thousands of true Protestants in these Kingdoms would, in a sense of their Duty and Allegiance, joyfully run the utmost hazards, to maintain his Rights; and would believe it (as it is) their indispensable Duty, tho at the Expence of their Lives and Fortunes, to establish him in the Throne of his Royal Progenitors. The Lawyers tell us, *That no Act whatsoever can prejudice the lawful Heir in his Succession to the Crown; no Act of his own can do it, nor no Act of others, no not an Attainder*: So that to oppose his Claim, is with a hardened Face to resist all Laws, and violate all Sanctions, divine and humane.

Those Men therefore, that pretending the Cause of Religion, will go on thus to oppose the Duke, are the Betrayers of that Religion they pretend to support; and at the same time are the Underminers of the Peace and Safety of the State: The Desertion of the Protestants Profession, is so far from warranting an Exclusion of the Duke, that Apostacy from the Faith of Christ could nor
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do it. The Principles of Christian Religion, and the Practice of the Christian Church in the Case of *Julian* the Apostate, do sufficiently evidence that it could not. I heartily wish and pray, That Men would give themselves the leisure to reflect a little, and not obstinately, wickedly, and foolishly, involve themselves in such Labyrinths, as they will very hardly (if at all) be able to extricate themselves out of, and can have no other probable Issue than Ruin, and too late Repentance.

I hope, Sir, you will pardon this long Letter, long in it self, tho short, its Argument considered. I could not well contain my self longer from writing something, tho but briefly, on this Subject, to vindicate (at least between our selves) our Religion, and the Rights of the Duke, from the false Zeal of their Opposers.

I could address these Thoughts no where better than to you, whose Loyalty rejoices in a loyal Theme; and whose Friendship will pardon and rectifie the Errors of,

S I R,

*Your most faithful Friend,
and humble Servant.*

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THere is newly published a small Treatise, Entituled, A Letter from a Gentleman of Quality in the Country to his Friend, upon his being chosen a Member to serve in the approaching Parliament, and desiring his Advice, being an Argument relating to the Point of Succession to the Crown; shewing from Scripture, Law, History, and Reason, how improbable (if not impossible) it is to bar the next Heir in the Right Line from the Succession. *This Point is so fully proved by the ingenious Author (a good Protestant and eminent Lawyer) that by the most Learned it is thought unanswerable.*

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